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RAEFORD, NORTH CAROLINA

25 CENTS

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Medical Center gets building; now board will see if price is right

The proposed Hoke Family Medical Center finally may have a home as members of two medical boards reached a preliminary compromise last Thursday.

The compromise ends several weeks of controversy revolving around Hoke's doctor shortage.

Younger Snead, president of the Hoke County Medical Complex Inc., addressed the new board

appointed by the county commissioners after a series of meetings with representatives from the new organization, the county commissioners, and his own board.

"We met Tuesday night and put together a proposal everybody'll like," he said.

Snead said the HCMC would lease the building currently housing Dr. Bob Townsend's office

for \$3,500 per month for 36 months, a substantial increase over the current rent rate of approximately \$1,000 per month.

Snead, who only weeks ago said the HCMC was "not interested in renting that building," said the old board would "help in any way we think we can."

Snead requested one member be appointed to

serve on both boards simultaneously, other than Walter Coley, as a permanent member. They selected Kay Thomas to fill the position.

The HCMC also requested any structural changes to be submitted to the old board for approval.

"At the end of three years, if successful like we (See MEDICAL, page 5)



Norm Farnham maintains the pet cemetery.



A canine grave marker.

Animal lover provides resting place for pets

"Zero," "Cocoa," "Bambi" — names you wouldn't normally expect to find on tombstones.

But pets are loved ones too, as Norm Farnham will attest.

He's the owner of Small Pet Animal Cemetery and Crematory, Hoke County's only pet cemetery.

About three years ago, Farnham bought five and one-half acres of land adjacent to Ashley Heights Baptist Church's cemetery at the corner of Reservation and Strother roads. Since then more than 100 pets — cats and dogs mostly, but even a rabbit and duck — have been buried there by grieving owners.

Other people have reserved plots, just like people do for their human loved ones.

"It's very therapeutic," he says when asked why some people go to the expense of funerals for their pets. "It's just like visiting the grave of a loved one — it is a loved one, just like a husband or a wife," he said.

People who use the cemetery, he said, "feel it's absolutely (See PETS, page 4)

Judge: girl can't visit uncle with AIDS

Courtney Rogers dotes as do most uncles in Hoke County. But unlike most, Rogers carries the HIV virus, and a judge denied him visitation rights for his niece.

Last week a judge ruled the 10-year-old girl cannot spend time at her paternal grandparents' home shared with their AIDS-infected son in Antioch.

"We'll see this thing through to the end, until we can see her again," Rogers said. "We're not trying to take her from her

family." Rogers, who tested positive for the HIV virus about five years ago said the decision has torn his family.

"It's just devastated my family," he said.

"This is the first time I've been persecuted for the thing."

Although Rogers said the reality of AIDS frightens people, he feared the resulting discrimination more.

"What's happening is exactly what I was afraid of," he said.

Rogers said he was reluctant to tell anyone when he discovered he carries the fatal disease for fear of persecution and confusion in the family.

"The physical pain of this disease is nothing compared to the emotional part," he said. "Physically I feel fine, emotionally I'm distraught."

The battle began when Rogers' former sister-in-law and her new husband, Frankie (See AIDS, page 4)

Boys debut in Big Apple

If you see people gathering around four youths harmonizing in Cross Creek Mall, don't expect to find a stage. It's just some Hoke County boys having fun and testing their talent.

The four boys, aged 15 to 18, practice their vocal skills just about anywhere for their upcoming performance at the famed Apollo Theater in New York.

The young quartet knows the performance is a one-time opportunity, but excitement overwhelms any nervousness.

"We're looking for a career in singing," 18-year old Kenneth Davis said. "But if it doesn't work out we'll still have something else to fall back on."

"We'll still sing," Elvin McCollum said.

McCollum, a rather shy 17-year old, said he plans for a career in (See SINGERS, page 4)



They sing on the basketball court, too.

Cumberland County man arrested for wife's death

Hoke detectives arrested the husband of a slain Cumberland County teacher last Thursday for her murder near Twin Oaks.

Eric Fernando Murillo, 42, of 1101 Paddington Place, Fayetteville, is being held without bond for the shooting death of his 35-year old wife Beth Marie.

Mrs. Murillo, his fourth wife, was brought to Cape Fear Valley Medical Center on June 24 for treatment of a gunshot wound to the head.

According to the initial Sheriff's report, Murillo said he accidentally shot his wife.

Murillo pleaded guilty 21 years ago to involuntary (accidental) manslaughter in the death of his first wife in Los Angeles County.

According to her friends, the couple experienced marital problems prior to the shooting.

Mrs. Murillo's friend, Beth Denelamp, said the teacher at J.W. Coon moved to the couple's Hoke County cabin behind the Twin Oaks Subdivision to separate from her husband.

"They had problems from the beginning," Denelamp said. "People that were around her knew how violent he was. It's not surprising that it happened, but it's devastating."

Denelamp said she saw Murillo strike her, and she and her friend tried several times to report him for wife beating.

According to Cumberland County Sheriff's reports, several incidents between the couple were reported from 1987 until 1992.

In 1987, according to one report, she did not press charges against her husband after authorities responded to a call for assault by pointing a gun. Also, in July of 1989, Cumberland County law enforcement responded to an assault on a female call, but Mrs. Murillo again did not press charges.

Claire Cannon, mother of the deceased who recently fought her son-in-law for her daughter's remains, declined to comment on the case except to say, "Both my husband and I believe in the judicial system and the people of North Carolina to see that justice is done."

Utilities dir. reprimanded for sewer tap

Raeftord's utilities director will be disciplined for authorizing a contractor to tap a county sewer line to serve property he co-owns and is about to develop.

Jerry Jackson is being disciplined by City Manager Tom Phillips for his role in getting sewer service to a piece of property he owns with Frankie Gilbert.

The tap came to light when Jackson and Gilbert approached Raeftord City Council last week to get the property annexed into the city, saying they wanted police protection for a convenience store, laundromat and car wash they are planning to build. The property is at the corner of Hwy. 401 Business and Rockfish Road. The annexation was voted down.

At that meeting Gilbert told council members a tap had been made by Gilbert's and Jackson's contractors, with county authorization, to the pressurized sewer line serving a new military housing development a few miles down Rockfish Road. Gilbert said they had hired engineers to check the feasibility of the tap and were assured it would work.

News of the tap clearly angered City Manager Phillips who said at the meeting he was still trying to get the County to work out details of an agreement to give Raeftord authority over taps to the line, because the City is ultimately responsible for effluent going into the City's waste treatment plant. He said the County shouldn't have authorized the tap.

After Monday's meeting, Phillips checked out the tap with County Manager Barry Reed and took disciplinary action after Reed said neither he, nor any county official, authorized the tap.

Because of confidentiality rules, Phillips wouldn't identify Jackson as the employee disciplined in the matter, nor would he say exactly what sort of action was taken. He did say he "contacted the property owner and confronted him with my concern." Phillips said the property owner, who was also a City employee, said he had talked to County Manager Reed and left with the understanding he had the authority to authorize the tap.

Jackson told The News-Journal he handled the tap "above board" from the beginning. He said he went to Reed, who expressed concern about the line being pressurized and who referred him to the County's engineers. Jackson said the engineers assured him there would be "no problem," so he proceeded with the tap.

"What I told him," Reed said yesterday, was I would check with engineers and we'd work with them based on what the engineers said would be possible.

"No one with the County ever authorized the tap. Period. Exclamation Point," Reed said.

"He's the utilities director and he understands you can't just go to the contractor and get a tap put in," he said. "There are formal procedures in the City to get a tap, and we're going to have them in the County eventually."

(See TAP page 12)

Around Town

By Sam C. Morris

The temperatures did drop last week, but the drop wasn't as low as most forecasters had predicted. They dropped from the 100s to the low 90s. We did get some rain, but it was spotty; about one inch to just a trace of rain in different parts of the county. Whatever we got and wherever it fell, it was welcomed, because the ground was extremely dry.

The forecast for the coming week calls for the temperatures to be in the 90s Wednesday and Thursday and the lows at night in the 70s. Friday and Saturday we will see temperatures in the high 80s and the lows will be in the high 60s. There is a chance of the thundershowers any afternoon.

* * *

I don't know if the rains came soon enough to save many of the gardens that are around the county. Monday I went to Allendale Township to get some peas and I was told that these might be the last this farmer would have this year. I was also told

that the butterbean crop might not make it because of the dry weather. Maybe some of the late gardeners will come through with a good crop of peas and beans.

* * *

Last week in an item in this column I incorrectly stated that W. R. Barrington was hired by the County Commissioners as the first rural policeman of Hoke County. The Barringtons moved to Raeftord in 1926 just before the big snow.

Mr. Barrington was later hired as a deputy sheriff by sheriff D. H. Hodgin and he also was jailer of the county for many years—Thanks, Bootsie, for the correction.

* * *

The Democratic Convention came to an end last Thursday night and from the looks on TV they were all in agreement on every issue. It must have been a 4-star affair, because after the convention, the polls showed the Clinton-Gore ticket around 22 points ahead of the Republican ticket. (See AROUND, page 12)